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ABSTRACT

The attention being given to foreign language education and international studies brings with it the realization that coalitions and interorganizational ventures are necessary. There is also the need for an understanding of the kind of organization with which one is dealing and how different organizations are likely to behave in interorganizational relationships. Five contextual features are isolated: (1) congruity of organizational types and purposes; (2) complexity, a factor that is directly related to the capacity of the organization for change; (3) the leadership or risk-taking factor, and the access of leaders to titles, appointments, and media attention; (4) the ways in which foreign language and international education are administered in different types of educational institutions; and (5) leadership by coalition, that is leadership with the communications-cultural component of society, including universities, and the state and regional supervisory structure. Existing research suggests that coalition, as distinct from other types of relationships, may be the most favorable mode for the field of international education to consider. (AMH)

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Choosing Your Partner:
Interorganizational Issues in International Education

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It happens every quarter-century. Propelled by presumed crises and prodded by presidential commissions, key segments of the academic community in America have once again been mustering forces to advance the position of international and foreign language education in schools and colleges around the country. But this time it may be different. Events in the Persian Gulf and Central American states not withstanding, there has yet to be a trap-gate event. Hostage takings, OPEC price hikes, invasions of Cambodia and Afghanistan, a SONY-on-every-table and a Toyota-in-every-garage--these all seem endemic to the environment. And the fact that we accept them as such indicates that we may be witness to a moment in history in which international education becomes more than an ad hoc phenomenon. The moment is different, too, because out society has grown up into the problem, and because the variety of organizations that sustain the social fabric now realize how great their stake in knowledge about the world really is.

This realization promises coalitions; and in constrictive times, academics view coalitions as utopias. We have thus duely come forward with a plethora of propositions for interorganizational ventures, visions of new settings in which to carry on the work we always believed to be valuable. Least these visions attain merely the status of what Seymour Sarason once called "controlled fantasies," (1) I would like to address some of the contextual features of the relationships we imagine with school systems, corporations, state and municipal governments, labor unions and other organizations with which we seek to establish diplomatic relations.

But first a bit of self-consciousness on the way in which we have arrived at our propositions and visions. However eloquent their presentation and however much influence we have granted them, what usually passes for analysis in the works of those of us who wish to advance the cause of international and foreign langauge education, I propose, is not very helpful to either institutional or interorganizational efforts. The analysis consists, first, of meticulously collected and well-presented data of decline, over which there is much hand-wringing. This phase is followed by some very comon-sense and normative arguments--including appeals to national interest, national productivity, national defense--in addition to the academic vision of the True and the Beautiful (the fuller lives and greater sensitivities to other cultures that we profoundly believe mark our goals as educators).

From the hormative, the analyses pass to the prescriptive: annotated lists of national, state, and institutional program recommendations--a complete vitamin supplement. For the most part, the prescriptions make eminent sense. They address the dismal data and the uplifting arguments. If followed, they would provide us with an internationally educated citizenry, corps of translators and interpreters, more knowledgeable and sensitive overseas missions, increased intelligence capacities of defense agencies, more efficient sales forces for American business, more helpful receptions for foreign visitors to our own shores, and a more equitable involvement of our minority language and cultural populations in international affairs.

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To their credit, the mechanics of these prescriptive lists now pay homage to the realism of limited resources. While there has been some justification in crying "Federal" every time the movement needed a hype (because much of what is international is truly in the national interest), there is a growing recognition in these proposals that international education has been a soft money phenomenon for a quarter of a century or more, and that there are distinct liabilities to that branch of the economy, not the least of which is that claims for the effects of soft money in producing local institutional change are probably inflated (2). In this spirit, though, I have both heard and made suggestions in such lists ranging from potential roles of multinational corporations in faculty exchanges to the utilization of nearly-abandoned overseas church properties for student educational programs to the wholesale replacement of the Peace Corps by college and university teams (in a manner akin to the organization and administration of U.S.A.I.D. contracts).

The new versions of these analyses thus seem to look for marginal resources and marginal needs of non-educational organizations to address fundamental resource gaps and fundamental needs of educational organizations. If that's the new shape of the prescriptions, though, we are still going to suffer from vitamin deficiencies. We are looking for partners, and we don't know how to look.

For between the normative statements and the prescriptions should lie an understanding of the kind of organizations with which one is dealing and how they are likely to behave in interorganizational relationships. Let's see if we can make a start toward filling that gap.

Organizational Types

The first contextual feature for our imagined treaties is the variety of organizations that might have an interest in the field of international and foreign language education. The modern classics of organizational typologies were those of Blau and Scott (3) and Etzioni (4), both of which included what we sometimes call "voluntary associations" in the category of organizations, and thus cover many groups active in the international field. Blau and Scott looked outside the organizational structure and used the principle of cui bono, i.e. who benefits—membership, owners, clients, or the public at large—to determine their types. Etzioni's analysis drew on a completely different kind of concept, compliance, to distinguish organizational types by what went on inside them, specifically with reference to the kinds of power exercised and the types of involvements of participants in the organizations. He thus came up with a typology of coercive organizations (like state hospitals), utilitarian organizations (e.g., banks or labor unions), and normative organizations (universities and churches being among the more obvious) (5).

Superficially, congruity in organizational types and purposes would seem to facilitate interorganizational efforts of any kind, and (by the converse of that proposition) incongruity of type would seem to be a barrier. By this argument, the incongruity is easier to perceive, and the case of a potential venture between a university and a corporation might illustrate best. By Etzioni's basic units of analysis, a university exercises a type of moral control over its participants who, in turn, are both positively and intensely oriented toward the institution.(6) A corporation, on the other hand, uses remuneration as its principal instrument of control and its participants are more loosely oriented toward the organization. (7) Unless the corporation is driven wholly by international markets, its interest in international education--and the interest of its participants—is not likely to be strong enough for cooperative endeavor. Blau and Scott's analysis of the context would be even more direct: a university

is a service organization whose activities benefit clients while any business concern is engaged in activities to benefit owners. Unless the owners of the corporation in question are clients of the university, the motivation for cooperation will be tenuous.

In either case, it stands to reason that if a business has a constitutive international interest, it will seek to realize that interest internally in fundamentally different ways than will a university, ways designed to minimize the cost of the transaction. But if the corporation chooses education as the vehicle for realizing that international interest, its choice will be more the result of forces in the external environment than of its internal characteristics.

Indeed, modern thinking about organizations has also involved setting a balance between internal features and external environments in order to determine types. In yet another classic of this development of theory, Lawrence and Lorsch (8) perceived all organizations as looking outward toward their environments--which meant that every internal piece of the organization might look to a different environment. Again, the illustration is perhaps easiest to grasp in the case of corporations. The internal division of production, sales, and R&D each looks to a different external field: production to a technical-economic environment, sales to a market environment, and R&D to a "scientific environment." As Lawrence and Lorsch point out, each segment of the organization relies for its efficiency on a certainty of information about environmental conditions, the rate of change in those conditions, and feedback on the effects of its activities. Time is critical in providing all of these certainties, and the time lag is obviously the greatest in the case of R&D. Universities are critical components of the scientific environment of a corporation, and have the capacity to speed up the process of feedback on R&D.

The capacity of universities to play that feedback role is an important lever in establishing interorganizational endeavors in the international education field. This is a way of suggesting that the academic enterprise, which holds a moral value for foreign language and international education, is not limited to flights of hortatory in addressing a potential corporate interest in the field. Colleges and universities can provide concrete feedback concerning the productivity on an internationally-educated workforce, and that, in itself, may be extraordinarily persuasive. Consider, for example, the proposed cut-backs in the subsidized lending powers of the Export-Import Bank: the Boeings and the Westinghouses of our economy--along with many smaller firms--will have to develop more aggressive and imaginative international marketing strategies to maintain their positions. What they lose in public subsidies they will have to make up in other ways, and the level of training of their international marketing forces will be key.

But will a university be willing to shape that key? A university itself, of course, is likewise responsive to different external environments: faculty to disciplinary and professional bodies (the parallel to a corporation's "scientific environment"), admissions and student services units to a demographic and economic environment, administration to a regulatory and governance environment, and develpment and public affairs units to service environments. Whether it is a corporation of any type--manufacturing, service, financial, etc.--that an institution of higher education perceives to be part of one of these environments depends on the complexity of the college or university's own internal structure. Which is to say that the way we pick our partners may have as much to do with who we are as with who they are.

Organizational Complexity

The second contextual feature of the grounds of interorganizational relationships in international education is that of the complexity of organizations, a feature that is directly related to the capacity of the organization for change. Sociologists

have demonstrated that the higher the degree of complexity of organizations, the higher the likelihood of program change and the greater the rate of program change (9). Complexity demands both a range of knowledges and a depth of knowledges, hence, long periods of training and experience. The more occupations within an organization in which such training is required, the more the organization is professionalized. So much for elementary stuff. The secondary materials on complexity include such organizational features as the degree of centralization of authority, degree of codification and rules, and degree of stratification of jobs. The general maxim about such things is "the higher, the lower," i.e. the greater the degree, the lower the rate of program change. As interorganizational ventures invariably involve program change, such features of compatibility of organizations are extraordinarily important. It's a case of pick your partner well.

So it would seem that in the context of complexity (as opposed to the context of organizational types and purpose), universities and corporations, for example, are relatively congruous. To the extent to which they share international interests, they might make good venture partners, indeed. More complex organizations with greater numbers of professionals can adapt more quickly to changing environments, knowledges, techniques and technologies, and the pace of change is nowhere greater than in international contexts.

Now least one think that the situation is inequitable in the sense that it seems to be weighted agains types of postsecondary institutions other than universities, the congruity thesis also suggests that less complex organizations also have a decent shot at productive partnerships. As academics, we are in the business of serving people by advancing knowledge and by increasing the efficiency of training and instruction. There are some constituencies outside educational institutions for whom different kinds of postsecondary institutions are going to be able to do this better than others. The reason lies in the characteristics of organizations that command the allegiances of those constituencies.

Consider, for example, voluntary associations such as the Red Cross, the AMA, the League of Women Voters, the YMCA, Rotary International, etc., many of which, in Chad Alger's application of the term, have "foreign policies" (10) and with those policies, some forms of education and educational communication. These associations differ radically from formal organizations in precisely the sense that we have been considering formal organizations: the commitment of their memberships to central organizational goals is comparatively tenuous, and they are far less complex. On the grounds of complexity and focus of goals, they may be more evenly matched, as partners, with the average American liberal arts college.

For similar reasons, liberal arts colleges and the less complex of the state colleges may be able to deliver international education for rural and farm-related populations --which are more dependent on daily international developments and tend to possess a higher degree of international literacy than other population groups, or so one suspects. Though farm-related organizations are both voluntary and internally undifferentiated, one suspects that they command loyalties similar to those than a labor union commands. The combination of this positive orientation to the organization, structural simplicity, and the international environment for American agriculture argues well for a liberal arts college to work through the AAC to arrange apporpriate and mutually-beneficial service with the NFO.

By this I also mean to suggest that the corporate connection need not be the only example in our galaxy, though it tends to be the most frequent. Nonetheless, I would like to use that conection for a moment to play out a controlled fantasy and to thicken the plot. Remember that a few minutes ago, I noted that one distinguishing feature of

the environment for interorganizational cooperation in international matters from that in other matters is the pace of change. It was also noted that complex organizations were in a better position to adapt to change. Assume a multinational conglomerate with its own training institute. What environmental changes will present to it the options for interorganizational cooperation with institutions of higher education? And what kind of higher education institutions? Will it contract with the department of oriental languages at Old Siwash to train a portion of its sales force to speak Japanese? Will it contract with the department of economics at Research U. to develop a model of the service economy in Japan? Or will it send its sales force to Berlitz for the Japanese and use its own "faculty" in its own training division to develop service economy models and conduct seminars in Far Eastern economic development?

The answers are less obvious than they appear, for they depend strongly on what the affected divisions of the corporation judge to be the indirect costs and implications of each option. They answers depend equally on decentralization in the corporation and, hence, receptivity to innovation and departures from traditional roles. And the answers depend, too, on the third contextual feature, leadership.

The Leadership Factor

I have now twice begged the question of how to pick your partner, and have done so under the conviction that interorganizational relationships are not simple, bloodless matters of typological or structural congruity. In an environment so charged with change, we are heavily dependent on risk-takers in organizations, on people who, as Arthur Stinchcombe once observed, know that "you can't build a railroad within the law," who know that new organizations and organizational functions only rise rapidly to meet an environmental condition "if they have some disrespect for traditional standards." (11)

Those who are going to lead the interorganizational movement in international and foreign language education must be those who (as Stinchcombe noted in a more general context) "have a low degree of commitment to the norms of the system of stratification among organizations." (12) At the beginning of this piece, I suggested that we may have reached a moment in history in which a movement has been motivated to develop new organizational forms for purposes of international understanding, commerce, and control of the environment. The status of most of these efforts is currently ad hoc, and the organizational vehicles are not so much organizations as they are voluntary associations in transit. That transit will be heavily dependent on the risk-takers, and on those who believe that any type of organization--including the university--is no more important than another.

It is the essence of organizations in a society to compete for power, and, quite frankly, that is partly what the international education enterprise indexes its success by. Stinchcombe wisely observed that under such conditions "the distribution of prestige and deference among organizations are disputed" (13), i.e. we're headed for conflict. If so, the access of our leaders to titles, appointments, and media attention--a seemingly innocuous phenomenon--is extraordinarily important in advancing the context for interorganizational ventures.

At the same time, research has demonstrated that the effects of leadership on organizational innovation are idiosyncratic, not the result of organizational characteristics or formal authority. (14) What we're left with is the personal influence and informal effectiveness of change agents--whether in subdivisions of complex organizations

like universities or corporations or large school systems, or whether they play central leadership roles in less complex organizations like liberal arts colleges or voluntary associations. While I have no ready prescriptions to guarantee the health of the movement, I would strongly suggest that we identify, accept, and advance a strategically placed set of leaders within our own houses of learning. To do so, however, we need to understand how we have organized international education in academic institutions.

The Institutional Context

The fourth context for interorganizational relationships in international and foreign language education, then, is that of postsecondary institutions themselves and the ways in which those fields are structured and administered in different types of institutions. Depending on how a college or university looks at international education within the context of its mission--there are four types of activities at issue. And depending on the degree of organizational complexity, these activities may be integrated or differentiated.

(1) Curricular activities. The structures here involve not only departments, but concentrations shared among departments (e.g., Area Studies), subfields of disciplines (e.g., international economics), loosely-federated international curricula within School units (e.g. international management in Schools of Business Administration), and even more loosely organized dimensions of General Education curricula.

(2) Extracurricular activities. These fall principally in the student services area, and involve exchanges, the governance of foreign student affairs, and placement of students graduating with backgrounds in international or foreign language studies.

(3) Service activities. Such functions range from protocols for international visitors to private contracts for translation and interpreting to brokering interests between foreign institutions and organizations and their domestic counterparts. A heavy emphasis within these activities falls in services to school districts, including library, staff, resource, and curricular development. Some of these service functions have been well-described in the outreach activities of the NDEA Centers (15), though the locus for their administration varies according to institutional type and complexity.

(4) Research and Technical Assistance. Such activities range from USAID contracts under bi-lateral agreements to individual faculty efforts. There is usually no organizational consistency in the impetus for these activities, though they may well be coordinated or monitored by a Research Office--where one exists.

When one looks carefully at that conglomeration of functions, centralization of administration seems well-neigh impossible, though as Barbara Burn (16) and others (17) have pointed out, roughly one-fourth of American colleges and universities have experimented with offices of international programs at one time or another since the passage of the ill-funded International Education Act of 1966. Centralization may not always be desirable; but integration of functions may be more promising. Even so, this is a tough set of functions for an educational organization to integrate. There are at least six reasons for that

discouraging note:

(1) With the exception of foreign language departments, none of these functions has an established disciplinary base, hence none has a historical organizational niche in most collegiate institutions.

(2) Even foreign language departments do not possess a strong disciplinary knowledge paradigm, hence are politically weak (18) and dependent on either enrollments or other organizational linkages for their power.

(3) It is in the nature of curricular "concentrations" to be subordinated within the larger units of colleges and universities. And it is the nature of faculty to evidence professional and disciplinary loyalties that undermine their commitment to non-disciplinary-based programs.

(4) It is in the nature of Centers and Institutes (where they exist) to act independently of other organizational units, and to orient themselves more toward external environments than to internal organization (19).

(5) Global Education, as problem-centered curricula, tend to wind up in interdisciplinary, General Education, or ad hoc programs where the knowledge paradigm is exceedingly weak and the organizational base a chimera.

(60 Each of the four types of activities looks toward a different external environment--and for different reasons. For example, the foreign student phenomenon long ago ceased to be a normative activity and is now utilitarian: foreign students are part of the demographic and economic environment. And R&D offices in major universities are now more concerned with the overhead generated from AID and similar contracts than with institutional advancement (let alone with genuine contributions to another society).

Compounding these organizational issues are a series of observations one can too easily make on the nature of the academic workforce in international and foreign language education, particularly features relating to its demographics and the history of its training. James Hester may have waxed a bit lyrical on the issue when he noted that

> "our universities are staffed to a considerable extent by men and women whose mental furniture was put into place in another era, whose highly specialized disciplinary skills frequently exclude potential comparative international perspectives." (20)

But more mundane knowledge abounds. We know that international studies faculty are older, and that the field distributions of those faculty at major research universities are skewed toward the humanities. (21) Our knowledge may be lacking about sectoral interchanges, about the career paths of such individuals, but we can reasonably suspect that the workforce is less likely to take risks in contracting environments, that it grudgingly accepts student vocational interests, and that opportunities for new blood and energy are limited.

Our historical response to this situation has been to engage in faculty development independent of organizational development. The latter, a mind-boggling, resource-draining "complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organizations" themselves (22) is a task

that requires a level of energy and creativity that is paradoxically lacking in a period of pressure and decline. And it is a task that is facilitated, I would propose, by interorganizational relationships.

Leadership by Coalition

That's where the question of leadership arises again. For if innovation in international education within and among educational institutions is asserted to be dependent on the receptivity of senior academic officials, as Hoopes concluded from a study of the Regional Council for International Cooperation (23), then the movement is in trouble. It may well be, as Sanders and Ward have argued, that if the top institutional international affairs officer is a Vice President or an Assistant to the President, and if that person comes from the faculty with appropriate academic credentials and international experience, i.e. possesses credibility within the institution, the coordinating, lobbying, and internal leadership role is easier. (24) But that's a hunch that calls for research, just as research is still needed on the reciprocal influences of area studies, international programs, and international extracurricular and service programs in complex universities. (25)

But the setting for leadership—hence the necessary authority and power for realizing our objectives— may lie within a different configuration of organizations than those we have considered to date. Two perspectives may lead us toward an understanding of that setting.

One arises within the set of organizations that form what Herbert Schiller has called "the communications-cultural component in national life"(26). Most normative organizations—including colleges and universities--are in that circle. But so are the media, a collection of organizations as diverse as colleges and universities, ranging from complex corporate conglomerates to voluntary arms of interest groups. The media provide leadership in themselves in setting tones of public receptivity to increased activities in international and foreign language education, provide leadership in the technology of delivering that education, and, most importantly, provide the opportunities from innovators in educational organizations to advance our activities to the point at which other organizations will be less reticent to enter into cooperative ventures. Academics both have easier access to media than to other types of non-educational organizations and can serve the media more efficiently than they can serve other organizations. The reasons are not hard to find; but it may be worth recalling some principles from an earlier point in this discussion to add some critical dimensions to those reasons. As organizations, the media have a constitutive international interest, they are dependent on a complexity of external environments, and they sit at the crossroads of change.

A second perspective from which the leadership question begins to take on a different coloration was well suggested by Melvin Fox in his background paper for the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. (27) The organizations involved in the statewide language programs in Indiana and Washington that he analyzed included state agencies and educational jurisdictions other than the postsecondary. While acknowledging the critical leadership niche of the program risk-taker and innovator in the success of these programs, he also emphasized the symbolic blessings provided by state officials who (a) created a special supervisory position for a statewide coordinator of foreign language instruction, and (b) chose the state universities as leadership institutions. Both types of leadership drove toward "sustained sequencing that could assure vertical articulation within and between school districts, and horizontal articulation between languages and other subjects." (28) These differential leadership

roles resulted in a coalition among organizations of a similar type, educational organizations whose external environments included each other (a characteristic they share, and not so coincidentally, with the media). Organizational theorists have called structural relations among organizations of a similar type or system "coupling," and educational organizations are more "loosely coupled" than others because they are more dependent on control from the external environment, including the allocation of resourcesinto the educational system. (29)

While the field of interorganizational studies is fairly primitive, existing research suggests that coalition, as distinct from other types of relationships, may be the most promising mode for us to contemplate precisely because it is appropriate to a system so dependent on external environments. In his typology of contexts in which organizations interact, RolandWarren distinguished "unitary," "federative," "coalitional," and "social choice" relationships. (30) An illustration of the unitary relationship might be department stores of similar size in the same metropolitan area agreeing to engage in a common public service or promotional activity. That is a very tightly controlled relationship among very similar organizations in similar environments for a specific purpose. Bureaucratic patterns within each organization are well protected. Federations, on the other hand, involve a number of formal organizations of different types linked by yet another formal organization that subsumes some of the bureaucratic patterns, e.g., a Community Development Council. Such federative structures exist in the international education arena, and to the extent to which some of them--like IIE--provide stable, long-term programs of brokering and service, we invest them with a certain degree of centralized authority.

But most of our potential undertakings at the local level do not require such formal intermediary structures to serve as the place for decision making, and even Fox's analysis of the role of the state agency in promoting foreign language education does not suggest an organizational form that would detract from the authority and initiative of local institutions. Our interorganizational links, by definition, must be weaker than those of federations, -The units involved--schools, colleges, corporations, unions, associations, etc.--have disparate goals themselves; and it is hard for them to define an inclusive goal when they address an international issue.

A Distinctive Environment for Coalitions

Yet the field of international education (and as it includes foreign language education), I propose, is distinctly suited to organizational coalitions. Certainly one must ask how an interorganizational venture in international education differs from other interorganizational undertakings in education. Broadly conceived, international education is shaped--and I shudder at the cliche--by an environment as wide as the world itself. But it is an environment of which I would propose the following characteristics:

(1) A greater variety of organizational types is involved--as actors and subjects--in international education than in any other multidisciplinary academic field. We are dealing with governments, associations, international organizations, coporations, academic institutions--in fact, almost the entire panoply of organizational types.

(2) The rate of change in the field is greater than for any other multidisciplinary area. It is wholly possible that the technology of the subjects involved will never catch up to the actors or to the changes that condition their relationships.

(3) There is a unique balance in the subject matter between the ambiguity

suggested by change and the stability of the variety of communication systems, i.e. languages, that are constitutive to the field.

(4) But there is an imbalance in the environment reflected in the range of inequality and complexity of its subjects and actors, from the haves of various kinds to the have-nots of various kinds.

Within such a distinctive environment, the coalitional arrangement has a persuasive draw, and in that sense can lead sometimes doubting organizations into potentially productive undertakings. A coalition involves ad hoc divisions of labor responsive to local authority, encourages the local risk-taker and innovator, respects diversity of organizational type and complexity, and, as Burton Clark's analysis of inter-organizational relationships in education points out, escapes "the constraints of-political accountability." (31)

All this is not to imply that the form is sufficient, that we can ignore care in picking our specific partners in such coalitions. Indeed, the intent of much of this piece has been to prod you into thinking more constructively about the factors involved in choosing partners. For there is a great danger that if we rush out to establish utopian <u>forms</u>, the issues themselves--and not merely the division of labor --will become ad hoc. That is not a situation that the nation can afford. Nor the world, for that matter.

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13. Stinchcombe, p. 148.

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24. Sanders and Ward, pp. 188-191.

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